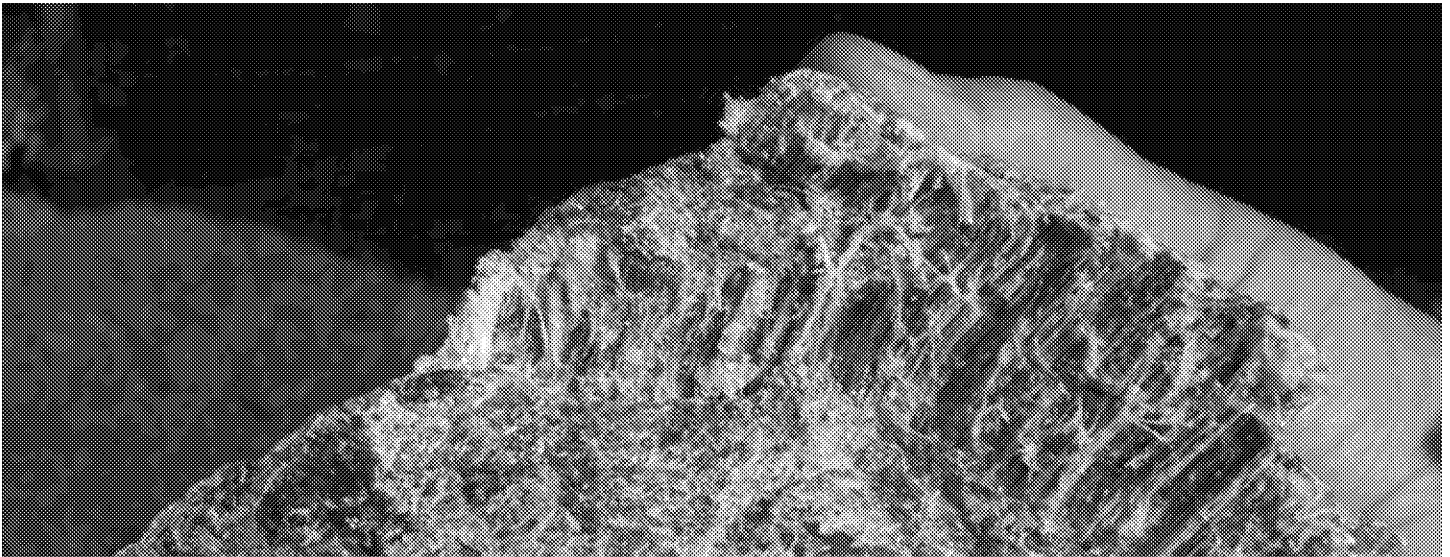


Message

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**From:** Faeth, Lisa [Faeth.Lisa@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 9/26/2018 2:54:04 PM  
**To:** Askinazi, Valerie [Askinazi.Valerie@epa.gov]; Baptist, Erik [Baptist.Erik@epa.gov]; Barkas, Jessica [barkas.jessica@epa.gov]; Beck, Nancy [Beck.Nancy@epa.gov]; Blair, Susanna [Blair.Susanna@epa.gov]; Blunck, Christopher [Blunck.Chris@epa.gov]; Brown, Sam [Brown.Sam@epa.gov]; Buster, Pamela [Buster.Pamela@epa.gov]; Canavan, Sheila [Canavan.Sheila@epa.gov]; Caraballo, Mario [Caraballo.Mario@epa.gov]; Carroll, Megan [Carroll.Megan@epa.gov]; Cherepy, Andrea [Cherepy.Andrea@epa.gov]; Christian, Myrta [Christian.Myrta@epa.gov]; Corado, Ana [Corado.Ana@epa.gov]; Davies, Clive [Davies.Clive@epa.gov]; DeDora, Caroline [DeDora.Caroline@epa.gov]; Devito, Steve [Devito.Steve@epa.gov]; Doa, Maria [Doa.Maria@epa.gov]; Drewes, Scott [Drewes.Scott@epa.gov]; Dunton, Cheryl [Dunton.Cheryl@epa.gov]; Edelstein, Rebecca [Edelstein.Rebecca@epa.gov]; Edmonds, Marc [Edmonds.Marc@epa.gov]; Elwood, Holly [Elwood.Holly@epa.gov]; Faeth, Lisa [Faeth.Lisa@epa.gov]; Farquharson, Chenise [Farquharson.Chenise@epa.gov]; Fehrenbacher, Cathy [Fehrenbacher.Cathy@epa.gov]; Feustel, Ingrid [feustel.ingrid@epa.gov]; Frank, Donald [Frank.Donald@epa.gov]; Gibson, Hugh [Gibson.Hugh@epa.gov]; Gimlin, Peter [Gimlin.Peter@epa.gov]; Gorder, Chris [Gorder.Chris@epa.gov]; Gordon, Brittney [Gordon.Brittney@epa.gov]; Grant, Brian [Grant.Brian@epa.gov]; Gray, Shawna [Gray.Shawna@epa.gov]; Groeneveld, Thomas [Groeneveld.Thomas@epa.gov]; Guthrie, Christina [Guthrie.Christina@epa.gov]; Helfgott, Daniel [Helfgott.Daniel@epa.gov]; Henry, Tala [Henry.Tala@epa.gov]; Kapust, Edna [Kapust.Edna@epa.gov]; Kemme, Sara [kemme.sara@epa.gov]; Koch, Erin [Koch.Erin@epa.gov]; Krasnic, Toni [krasnic.toni@epa.gov]; Lavoie, Emma [Lavoie.Emma@epa.gov]; Lee, Mari [Lee.Mari@epa.gov]; Lee, Virginia [Lee.Virginia@epa.gov]; Leopard, Matthew (OEI) [Leopard.Matthew@epa.gov]; Liva, Aakruti [Liva.Aakruti@epa.gov]; Lobar, Bryan [Lobar.Bryan@epa.gov]; Mclean, Kevin [Mclean.Kevin@epa.gov]; Menasche, Claudia [Menasche.Claudia@epa.gov]; Morris, Jeff [Morris.Jeff@epa.gov]; Moss, Kenneth [Moss.Kenneth@epa.gov]; Mottley, Tanya [Mottley.Tanya@epa.gov]; Moyer, Adam [moyer.adam@epa.gov]; Myers, Irina [Myers.Irina@epa.gov]; Myrick, Pamela [Myrick.Pamela@epa.gov]; Nazef, Laura [Nazef.Laura@epa.gov]; Ortiz, Julia [Ortiz.Julia@epa.gov]; Owen, Elise [Owen.Elise@epa.gov]; Parsons, Doug [Parsons.Douglas@epa.gov]; Passe, Loraine [Passe.Loraine@epa.gov]; Pierce, Alison [Pierce.Alison@epa.gov]; Pratt, Johnk [Pratt.Johnk@epa.gov]; Price, Michelle [Price.Michelle@epa.gov]; Reese, Recie [Reese.Recie@epa.gov]; Reisman, Larry [Reisman.Larry@epa.gov]; Rice, Cody [Rice.Cody@epa.gov]; Richardson, Vickie [Richardson.Vickie@epa.gov]; Ross, Philip [Ross.Philip@epa.gov]; Sadowsky, Don [Sadowsky.Don@epa.gov]; Santacroce, Jeffrey [Santacroce.Jeffrey@epa.gov]; Saxton, Dion [Saxton.Dion@epa.gov]; Scarano, Louis [Scarano.Louis@epa.gov]; Scheifele, Hans [Scheifele.Hans@epa.gov]; Schmit, Ryan [schmit.ryan@epa.gov]; Schweer, Greg [Schweer.Greg@epa.gov]; Selby-Mohamadu, Yvette [Selby-Mohamadu.Yvette@epa.gov]; Seltzer, Mark [Seltzer.Mark@epa.gov]; Sheehan, Eileen [Sheehan.Eileen@epa.gov]; Sherlock, Scott [Sherlock.Scott@epa.gov]; Simons, Andrew [Simons.Andrew@epa.gov]; Sirmons, Chandler [Sirmons.Chandler@epa.gov]; Slotnick, Sue [Slotnick.Sue@epa.gov]; Smith, David G. [Smith.DavidG@epa.gov]; Smith-Seam, Rhoda [smith-seam.rhoda@epa.gov]; Stedeford, Todd [Stedeford.Todd@epa.gov]; Strauss, Linda [Strauss.Linda@epa.gov]; Symmes, Brian [Symmes.Brian@epa.gov]; Tanner, Barbara [Tanner.Barbara@epa.gov]; Thompson, Tony [Thompson.Tony@epa.gov]; Tierney, Meghan [Tierney.Meghan@epa.gov]; Tillman, Thomas [Tillman.Thomas@epa.gov]; Tomassoni, Guy [Tomassoni.Guy@epa.gov]; Tran, Chi [Tran.Chi@epa.gov]; Turk, David [Turk.David@epa.gov]; Vendinello, Lynn [Vendinello.Lynn@epa.gov]; Wallace, Ryan [Wallace.Ryan@epa.gov]; Wheeler, Cindy [Wheeler.Cindy@epa.gov]; Widawsky, David [Widawsky.David@epa.gov]; Williams, Aresia [Williams.Aresia@epa.gov]; Williams, Bridget [Williams.Bridget@epa.gov]; Williamson, Tracy [Williamson.Tracy@epa.gov]; Wills, Jennifer [Wills.Jennifer@epa.gov]; Wise, Louise [Wise.Louise@epa.gov]; Wolf, Joel [Wolf.Joel@epa.gov]; Wright, Tracy [Wright.Tracy@epa.gov]; Yowell, John [yowell.john@epa.gov]  
**Subject:** News Articles (For EPA Distribution Only)

**BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT ARTICLES**



This October 2011 image shows a piece of extracted serpentine, which contains chrysotile asbestos fibers from Asbestos, Quebec, Canada.

Photographer: Laurent Vu The/AFP/Getty Images

News

### **Groups Petition EPA to Force Companies to Share Asbestos Use Data**

Posted Sept. 26, 2018, 9:02 AM

By Sam Pearson

- EPA receives petition over 'loophole' letting Occidental Chemical withhold asbestos data
- Agency has 90 days to respond or face possible lawsuit

The EPA should require companies to report their annual imports and uses of asbestos to inform an ongoing risk assessment of the cancer-causing mineral, six public health organizations said in a Sept. 26 petition.

In a rulemaking petition sent to the Environmental Protection Agency, groups including the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization say the EPA needs the information from companies to ensure that a pending risk assessment of asbestos is realistic.

Depending on what the risk assessment concludes, the EPA could regulate controls for the mineral fiber.

Every four years, companies have to report the types, quantities, and uses of chemicals produced domestically and imported into the United States for substances present in large volumes, and the petitioners argue the EPA is granting too many exceptions to those rules.

### **The Big Picture**

The groups say the EPA isn't taking enough steps to get the full picture for asbestos. Sufficient levels of exposure to the fiber can lead to lung disease and cancer, according to the EPA.

The six groups include the Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization, American Public Health Association, Center for Environmental Health, Environmental Health Strategy Center, Environmental Working Group, and Safer Chemicals Healthy Families.

Asbestos is no longer mined in the United States, but a few companies import it to manufacture chloralkali products such as chlorine, caustic soda, and other commodity chemicals. The trade group the American Chemistry Council emphasizes the public health applications of chlorine including uses in sanitizing water and buildings.

### **Natural Enough?**

During the 2016 reporting period, Axiall Corp. and Olin Corp. reported their imports of asbestos to the EPA, but Occidental Chemical Corp. did not. Occidental said the information did not have to be submitted because the rule exempts naturally occurring substances, and the EPA agreed.

These kind of data gaps bode poorly for the agency's risk assessment of asbestos, Robert Sussman, a lawyer in Washington who is working with the groups, told Bloomberg Environment.

Under the nation's primary chemicals law, the EPA must complete risk evaluations of asbestos and nine other chemicals by December 2019, with a grace period of up to six months.

"If EPA doesn't have good information on all the various uses of asbestos that are out there, they will not be able to do a good risk evaluation," Sussman, a former EPA official, said.

"I don't know that the conclusions that they reach will be very well informed or necessarily protective of public health. They may make assumptions that are just not realistic."

### **Seeking Stricter Limits**

Occidental Chemical Corp. didn't respond to a request for comment by Bloomberg Environment but has previously defended the decision as appropriate.

The health groups want the EPA to issue a regulation clarifying that reporting asbestos use or importation should not be exempted.

They also want companies to report asbestos-containing articles, make the threshold for reporting asbestos use lower than for other substances, and block companies from withholding the files as confidential business information.

The agency has 90 days to respond to the petition or face possible legal action.

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### **EPA's New Makeover**

Posted Sept. 26, 2018, 7:40 AM

By [Chuck McCutcheon](#)

The EPA wants its regional offices to look like its headquarters for the sake of improving management—but some current and former employees suspect an ulterior motive.

They worry that the planned reorganization, which Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced earlier this month, could give the Trump administration a chance to shrink the agency.

“I wouldn’t doubt there is a back-of-the-envelope plan that talks about cutting enforcement resources once the reorganization goes into effect,” said Michael Mikulka, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704 and spokesman for Save the U.S. EPA.

Abby Smith digs deeper in a story out today.



EPA workers remove freon, compressor oil, mercury switches, and rotten food from refrigerators and other items at a New Orleans dumpsite in October 2005 to try to minimize the potential of soil and groundwater contamination.

Photographer: Chris Graythen/Getty Images

## News

### Trump’s EPA Makeover Could Put Regional Offices on Shorter Leash

Posted Sept. 26, 2018, 7:00 AM

By Abby Smith

- Effort will allow better visibility, greater consistency in regions, EPA operations chief says
- Former, current EPA officials raise concerns about staff cuts, leadership changes

The EPA’s regional offices could see structural changes by year’s end, but the trickle-down effects—on enforcement, staff levels, and leadership—are already raising alarms among current and former workers.

The Environmental Protection Agency is moving forward quickly with a reorganization of its 10 regional offices to minimize uncertainty for staff in those offices, Henry Darwin, the agency’s chief of operations and acting deputy administrator, told Bloomberg Environment.

Acting Administrator Andrew Wheeler announced the effort, which will reshuffle the regional offices to mirror EPA headquarters, in a Sept. 6 memo.

Former EPA officials and current employees are wary the reorganization could give the Trump administration an opportunity to shrink the agency. The effort could also allow political leadership a tighter rein over the regions—where approximately half of the agency’s career staff work and where much of the on-the-ground permit reviews, oversight, and enforcement operations occur.

“I wouldn’t doubt there is a back-of-the-envelope plan that talks about cutting enforcement resources once the reorganization goes into effect,” Mike Mikulka, president of the American Federation of Government Employees Local 704 and spokesman for Save the U.S. EPA, told Bloomberg Environment.

### **State Effects?**

Changing up regional operations could affect state regulators, too.

Standardizing the daily work could help set common expectations, but having every region look the same could dilute the nuance that the current varied structures allow, based on states’ particular environmental needs.

“You would think this new administration, which is so keen in deferring to the states, would be sensitive to the need for the regions to have their ears to the ground and reflect the priorities of the states that they’re working with,” Robert Sussman, a former deputy EPA administrator in the Clinton administration, told Bloomberg Environment.

### **EPA Plans**

Under the EPA’s proposal, each regional office would have eight divisions, matching the setup of headquarters. Agency staff are now drafting the final detailed plan, which will need the OK from congressional appropriators.

Lawmakers haven’t said much yet about the EPA’s plan, but some raised concerns last year about job losses from potential closures of EPA offices in Chicago and Ann Arbor, Mich.

EPA leadership hopes the reshuffle will make implementation of agency regulations more consistent and give headquarters staff a better view inside the regions.

“It’s at times difficult for headquarters to see where the work is being done, and so it makes it difficult to have conversations and make decisions based upon resources, to evaluate operations and performance, and also to make sure policies are implemented as directed by headquarters in a consistent way across the regions,” Darwin said.

Currently, EPA regions can vary significantly in the ways they implement policy and work with states, Sam Sankar, executive director of the Environmental Council of the States, told Bloomberg Environment.

“If it’s done right, standardization can be a tool to improve things for everybody,” Sankar said. “A rising tide can lift all ships.”

### **‘Moving Desks Around’**

But the EPA plan comes just one year after the Trump administration explored the possibility of shuttering some regional offices. Agency officials ultimately determined closing offices wasn’t the right path, Darwin said.

Former and current EPA employees still point to dips in enforcement and an ongoing staff exodus as cause for concern.

"I don't think that the state or local industry here in Region 5 were saying they can't deal with region five because it's screwed up in terms of organizational structure," Mikulka said. "We don't have enough staff to do the work, and they're diverting people's attention to spend a lot of time on a reorganization."

The union chapter that Mikulka leads represents more than 900 EPA Region 5 staffers. The office has lost 31 people this year, on top of the 77 who left in 2017, and replacements aren't being hired quickly enough, he said.

EPA leadership announced in late June that the agency would hire 20 new staffers in Region 5—but since then, 11 employees have left and only two new staffers have been hired, Mikulka added.

### **Adjusting Resources**

Darwin said the realignment won't immediately result in changing staff levels. But better visibility into the regional offices "may allow us in the future to reallocate resources based upon need between the regions," he added.

That doesn't necessarily carry ill intent—internal tension always has existed about the varying size of the regions, Stan Meiburg, a former deputy regional administrator in regions 4 and 6, told Bloomberg Environment.

Region 4 in the Southeast, for example, serves more states and people than any other region, but it doesn't have the largest staff, added Meiburg, now director of graduate programs in sustainability at Wake Forest University.

But leadership at the regions may be in jeopardy, Sussman suggested, because if positions are redefined, it could open the door to replacing division heads.

"This could be an effort to exercise more control over who the key people are in regional management," he said.

Darwin, though, dismissed the idea the administration would be changing division heads. Some regions may need additional leadership if new divisions must be created, "but it is not intended to be an opportunity to demote existing leaders from their current positions," he said.

### **Smooth Transition**

The EPA last reorganized in the mid-1990s, under former Administrator Carol Browner. The effort consolidated the EPA's enforcement activities into a headquarters office and gave the regional offices the latitude to incorporate their differences into their design, Browner told Bloomberg Environment.

The process also invited EPA staff participation through public forums, she said. That could make a difference this time, too.

"Right now the agency is in a blue place," Browner said. "How they go about it is important. Is it imposed on people, or are they trying to help build it?"

State regulators want to ensure a smooth transition at the regions, their primary EPA point of contact.

"The endpoint is good, but if the change takes three years and causes chaos in the interim, that's not good," Sankar said.

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Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) speaks during a hearing on Jan. 23, 2018. Peters is the ranking member of a Senate subcommittee holding a Sept. 26 hearing on eliminating fluorochemicals from water.

Photographer: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

News

## Federal Efforts to Clean Up, Control Fluorochemicals Enter Spotlight

Posted Sept. 25, 2018, 3:39 PM

By Pat Rizzuto

- Remediation, human health, other research among issues at Senate fluorochemicals hearing
- Current, potential costs of federal actions also core issue

Efforts to remove fluorochemicals from water, destroy them, and prevent future contamination are among the topics three federal agencies are expected to address during a Sept. 26 Senate subcommittee hearing.

The information-gathering hearing focuses on a large group of emerging contaminants called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS. The chemicals, used in firefighting foams and nonstick coatings, are linked to a variety of health effects in humans. The hearing comes as the Environmental Protection Agency weighs setting enforceable limits for those chemicals in drinking water.

The hearing will explore the state of the science about the chemicals, research underway, and current and potential federal costs, an aide to the Senate Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight and Emergency Management, told Bloomberg Environment Sept. 21.

"The prevalence of PFAS contamination in communities across Michigan and the country is truly alarming," Sen. Gary Peters (D-Mich.) told Bloomberg Environment by email Sept. 19.

"We have to get to the bottom of how these chemicals are being used and monitored, what long-term effects they may have on human health, and the necessary steps for cleanup," said Peters, ranking member of the subcommittee, which is part of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs.

Federal agency witnesses include Peter C. Grevatt, director of the EPA's Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water; Maureen Sullivan, deputy assistant secretary of defense, energy, installations and environment at the Department of Defense; and Linda S. Birnbaum, who directs both the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the National Toxicology Program.

Those four agencies conduct and fund a wide array of remediation, toxicity, and other research on older and newer fluorochemicals, according to information they provided Bloomberg Environment prior to the hearing.

## Research Highlights

The Defense Department has identified at least 401 military properties that may be contaminated with per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, which long have been used in specialized fire-fighting foams that quickly put out jet fuel and other dangerous fires.

The research includes identifying and testing fluorine-free firefighting foams to see if they can substitute for the current PFAS formulations.

The department also supports studies to better understand how fluorochemicals move through the environment and ways to remove them from soil and water.

The EPA is working to understand the extent to which people, animals, and the environment are exposed to the chemicals and whether those exposures could be harmful, and developing toxicity values for some fluorochemicals.

The agency also is examining drinking water treatment methods.

Activated carbon is the most widely used method to remove fluorochemicals from water, yet it's unclear how well it performs for some of the newer, shorter chemicals.

The NIEHS is supporting research on other ways to remove the chemicals from water.

Other fluorochemical research the institute is sponsoring includes how exposure in the womb may affect later development.

## Hearing Context

Senators have pressed the EPA to issue binding drinking water limits for some of the fluorochemicals, although Grevatt didn't commit to do so during a recent Senate hearing. The agency said it will decide by the end of this year whether it will set enforceable limits.

Individuals from a New Hampshire and a Michigan community dealing with fluorochemical contamination also will testify, as will a firefighter representing the International Association of Fire Fighters.

Firefighters, including people whose military service includes emergency response, may be among those who are most highly exposed, because the specialized fire fighting foams they used often contained two older fluorochemicals called perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS).

Both chemicals don't break down in the environment, and they can remain in people's bodies for years where they may contribute to making it harder to get pregnant, increased cholesterol, reduced immune function, and cancer, according to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

Yet for decades those foams often were dispersed widely for training and actual fires at military sites, multiple researchers have told Bloomberg Environment. The foams also are used at commercial airports.



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## GREENWIRE ARTICLES

### NEPA decisions move to policy office

Ariel Wittenberg, E&E News reporter

Published: Tuesday, September 25, 2018



EPA policy chief Brittany Bolen now oversees the agency's National Environmental Policy Act compliance division. House Oversight Committee

EPA has finalized plans to shift environmental reviews from the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance to the Office of Policy.

A final rule moving the agency's National Environmental Policy Act compliance operations to the Office of Policy will be published in the *Federal Register* tomorrow, making the move official.

<https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2018/09/25/stories/1060099667>

## OTHER ARTICLES

Investigative Journalist to Speak in Spokane on PCB Threat

Spokane Public Radio

An investigative journalist who has spent years probing the story behind **toxic chemicals**, some of which are in the Spokane River, will be speaking this ...